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#### POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

- Look for a new Lucas County Engineer's Annual Summary Report due out soon
- Thanks to all our friends and associated businesses who sent holiday greetings. We hope you had a joyous holiday season
- If you have any ideas for articles, please contact Scott Bernhard @ 419-213-4547. The deadline for the next edition is April 1, 2005
- Past Newsletter issues available on the web @

[HTTP://CO.LUCAS.OH.US/ENGINEER](http://co.lucas.oh.us/engineer)

Man is the best computer we can put aboard a spacecraft ... and the only one that can be mass produced with unskilled labor.  
—Wernher von Braun

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## The Earley Edition

Keith G. Earley, P.E., P.S.  
Lucas County Engineer

### CHALLENGES AHEAD

As I begin my second term of office, it seems like a good time to look back at the past five years. I feel very fortunate that George Wilson hired so many good people and that we have such a good county highway system. Most of our pavements, bridges and culverts are currently in pretty good condition. Many of our roads have paved shoulders with enclosed ditches. We have recently constructed several intersection improvements, with more planned. Compared to some of the growing urban areas in the state, we have very little congestion.

My overall concern continues to be that revenue will not keep pace with inflation. Many Ohio cities, with aging infrastructure and declining population, have faced that same difficult situation for quite some time. In Lucas County, we have a moderately growing suburban area, and we need to make expensive improvements to handle the additional traffic safely, yet the overall county population is declining. Our major source of dedicated funding comes from countywide license plate fees. Since there is about the same number of vehicles in the county as people, the revenue is declining in direct proportion to the population.

The recent six cents a gallon increase in the gas tax will provide an 84% increase in gas tax revenue for counties, townships and municipalities. Urban townships will receive an even larger increase. We should be thankful that the state legislature provided this increase, but we need to recognize that gas tax does not provide a large portion of road and bridge funding for urban counties, and the full six cents won't be collected for a full year until 2008. About half of the full increase should be received in 2005. For our Department, gas tax amounted to 13% of our dedicated revenue in 2003. Increasing that 84% by the end of 2008 will amount to an approximate 11% increase in total dedicated revenue over five years, which probably won't cover inflation, but it certainly helps. Over the past ten years the consumer price index has increased 30%. Gasoline, asphalt, concrete and steel prices are already increasing much more than the index. The dedicated revenue has to pay for all wages and benefits, material, equipment, fuel, contract services and the local share of federal or state aided construction.

Most local governments, especially large cities, have recently seen their general fund revenue decline. Money that was previously dedicated to capital improvements is now being used for other purposes and perhaps even less will be spent on roadway improvements than prior to the gas tax increase. Timely maintenance can prevent very expensive reconstruction. Delaying needed maintenance and equipment creates a backlog that future budgets will find difficult to accommodate.

My office does not receive general fund revenue for roads and bridges, so a shortage in general fund revenue does not impact us directly. Our revenue is more stable and more predictable but not increasing. To assist the municipalities, we have accepted responsibility for major maintenance of 37 bridges inside municipalities on the extension of county roads.

When I took office in 2000 we had 101 employees. Since that time we have been trying to adjust to declining revenue and we now have 91 employees. We do have a very experienced and capable workforce, but many will be eligible for retirement within the next eight years. Nine people are eligible to retire this year. Therefore, it is very important that we evaluate what changes could be made to continue to provide good service and safe County roads. Our equipment, like our roads and our bridges, is in pretty good shape now, but maintaining that condition will take a significant financial commitment. When revenue does not keep pace with inflation and we take on additional responsibilities, it is necessary to evaluate our resources, set priorities, and look for ways to improve our operations.

Cont. on Pg. 6

## **WORKING TOGETHER WITH TMACOG**

JOHN CRANDALL

The Lucas County Engineer's Office has a lot of involvement with the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), especially in the area of transportation.

TMACOG is a voluntary association of local public agencies working together with the private sector to coordinate regional assets, opportunities, projects, and challenges. Primary membership is from Lucas, Wood, and Ottawa Counties in Ohio, and the lower townships of Whiteford, Bedford, and Erie in Monroe County, Michigan. There are also members from Fulton, Henry, Sandusky, and Erie Counties in Ohio, and Riga Township in Lenawee County, Michigan. TMACOG works closely with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), which also serves Monroe County.

The Officers and the Executive Committee report to the Board of Trustees and the General Assembly. Direct day-to-day operations of TMACOG comes from Anthony Reams, President; Kathleen Mehl, Vice-President for Commuter Services; William Best, Vice-President of Finance and Administration; Kurt Erichsen, Vice-President of Environmental Planning; and Dave Dysard, Vice-President of Transportation. The staff works with four Councils for Commuter Services, Transportation, Environmental, and Growth Strategies. The Councils are made up of representatives from member organizations, and all have both Standing and Ad Hoc committees.

The three main areas of work for the Transportation Council and transportation staff are the Long-range Plan for 2025, which was updated in 2004, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Annual Work Program, which is a detailed listing of goals and functions of the staff. In 2005, work will begin on a new Long-range Plan for 2035, which should be complete in 2007.

The Lucas County Engineer's Office has 10 staff members who serve on 20 TMACOG committees, of which 2 are organizational, 13 are transportation, 4 are environmental, and 1 is growth strategies. The Engineer's office contributes about \$22,000 per year to the organization along with an estimated 400 hours of staff time. The Board of Lucas County Commissioners contributes about \$117,000 per year to TMACOG.

Keith Earley, Lucas County Engineer, serves as Vice Chairman of the Transportation Council, and Jeff Lohse will be taking John Crandall's place on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Committee.

The TIP Committee ranks and recommends to the Transportation Council the use of Federal funds allocated to the region for various projects. The TIP is a four-year program of scheduling and monitoring about \$10 million per year of federal dollars, and the projects are evaluated and ranked every two years by the TIP committee. The area for the TIP covers all of Lucas and Wood Counties, and the three Townships in Monroe County. The TIP includes all transportation projects with federal funds, and all major state and local projects.

Dave Dysard, Vice President of Transportation at TMACOG, is very appreciative of the close working relationship his staff has with the Engineer's Office. A few years ago, when TMACOG had several sudden resignations, the Lucas County Engineer's Office stepped in, under contract, to manage the Regional TIP for a year, until staff could be replaced. Mr. Dysard said "From furnishing TMACOG traffic counts, to thinking creatively, to assisting members with expert advice, I rely on and have the greatest respect and appreciation for the quality work of the Lucas County Engineer's Office".

## **PREPONDEROUS PRECIPITATION**

Nearly 40" of snow has fallen this 2004-05 winter season and still counting (normal average—36"). Most of it is gone, but that has caused some flooding problems.



Prairie Ditch in Secor MetroPark



Camper in jeopardy along River Rd.



County truck navigates Frankfort Rd.

**LUCAS COUNTY ENGINEER'S TIP FUNDED PROJECTS**

JOHN CRANDALL

At the present time, the County Engineer's Office is involved in the following projects in the proposed FY '06 to '09 TIP:

Project	TMACOG Fed \$	Anticipated bid date	Remarks
Wabash Cannonball Tr. (2A, G, H)	\$812,000	3rd Qtr 06	Joint w/ BLCC, Whitehouse, Maumee, & Metroparks
Albon/S.R. 2 Intersection	\$200,000	1st Qtr 06	Lucas County Engineers
Sylvania Ave. Ph. 1 (Lancelot/Oak Park to Holland-Sylvania)	\$2,224,000	1st Qtr 09	Lucas County Engineers
Wabash Cannonball Tr. (3B)	\$454,000	3rd Qtr 08	Joint w/ BLCC, Whitehouse, Maumee, & Metroparks
McCord Rd. 3-lane (Central to Sylvania)	\$2,190,000	3rd Qtr 09	Lucas County Engineers
Angola Rd. Imp. (Whisperwood to McCord)	\$600,000	3rd Qtr 07	Joint w/ Village of Holland
King/Nebraska Intersection	\$300,000	3rd Qtr 07	Lucas County Engineers
Herr Rd. Bridge #102 Rehab	\$300,000	1st Qtr 06	Lucas County Engineers
Main St. Bridge Rehab	\$300,000	1st Qtr 07	Joint w/ City of Sylvania
Salisbury/Dussel Interchange Upgrade	\$2,900,000	4th Qtr 06	Joint w/ ODOT, Port Auth., BLCC, Toledo, & Maumee (*)
McCord Rd. Grade Separation	\$2,500,000	3rd Qtr 08	Joint w/ ODOT (*)
Total:	\$12,780,000		

One of the great opportunities for the Engineer's Office in coming together at TMACOG is to address regional priorities. The Office has been able to assist other jurisdictions with high priority projects beyond County funding. Some examples of such projects are the Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge, and the new Maumee River Crossing (I-280). In other cases, the office has been able to take a lead role, including local funding for such projects as Salisbury/Dussel Interchange, Millard Ave. Overpass, and the Summit St. Bridge rehabilitation.

The above projects total approximately \$70 million in total project costs, so it can be seen how TMACOG federal dollars are matched with local funds, Ohio Public Works funding, and other federal and state funds to get a multiplier of about 5.5 to 1. About 16 million (23%) is underfunded at this time (\*).

For the longer outlook, there is funding ear-marked for some other projects that the Engineer's Office is working on with hopes to get these projects moving into design in late 2006 or early 2007, for construction in 2010 to 2012. This is a section of the TIP referred to by the locals as the "pipeline". These projects are Sylvania Ave. Ph. 2 (McCord to Lancelot/Oak Park), Wabash Cannonball Trail 2A, (Yawberg Rd.), McCord Rd. 3-lane Imp. (Regents Park Blvd. to Central), and US-20A/Maumee-Western (Coder to Briarfield). The total project cost of these projects is \$8.5 million, with TMACOG proposed for approximately \$5.5 million of Federal Aid.



EMPLOYEE PROFILE

David Durfey, Equipment Operator 3 (paint truck), started with Monclova Township in 1973 and has been with the County Engineer since 1982. He is a graduate of Anthony Wayne High School and lives on Weckerly Rd. in Monclova Township, 1/8 of a mile from his Grandparents homestead, and a short distance from where he was born. His wife and high school sweetheart Marie, lived just around the block.



David Durfey  
Equipment Operator

Dave and Marie have 2 children and 5 grandchildren. His son Tim works in the survey crew. A lifetime member of the Monclova Township Volunteer Fire department, Dave also likes camping and the great outdoors, and plans to travel the United States after retirement. He also enjoys cruises to other countries.

"Each day is interesting, I never do the same things. I enjoy the freedom of not being cooped up inside, I like the outdoors during the summer, although I am enjoying the winter's cold less each year" is what Dave had to say about Lucas County, and his secret to life is "laugh a lot, enjoy life, and don't worry about the little things".

Paul Elinger, Road Maintenance Superintendent, says "Dave is a good worker, and over the 15 years I've worked with him he needs little supervision. Also, Dave is a person that believes that anything can be said as long as you put humor into it (just kidding)."

ENGINEER INDUCTION

Keith Earley was sworn into office for his second term by State Senator Teresa Fedor (pictured above) on December 30, 2004. A reception was held in the office after the proceedings. Keith expressed his appreciation and support from other agencies, jurisdictions, and the electorate. He also mentioned how much he and his wife Ruby enjoy living here. Congratulations Keith!

NATIONAL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Keith Earley, Lucas County Engineer, has been appointed as a member of the Transportation Steering Committee of the National Association of Counties (NACo). The appointment was recommended by the State of Ohio Association. More information on NACo can be found on the web at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).

SERVICE AWARDS

A service awards presentation for the main office was held on December 9, 2004.

The following service awards recipients were honored:

20 Years

Greg Wimberly

25 Years

Mark Shiple

Rick Kaufman

Dave Linker

Brian W. Miller

Gary Tucholski

30 Years

Dave Bettinger



Pictured from left, Keith Earley, Mark Shiple, Gary Tucholski, Dave Bettinger, Rick Kaufman, and Brian W. Miller.

DAVE BETTINGER RETIRES

Pictured left to right—Jeff Lohse (Dave's Supervisor), Dave Bettinger, and Keith Earley.



Dave Bettinger receives his retirement gift

ED TYSON RETIRES AT ROAD MAINTENANCE GARAGE

After 29 years of dedicated service at the Road Maintenance Garage, Ed Tyson retired on November 12, 2004. Ed was hired in 1975 as a Watchman and was promoted to Equipment Operator II in 1981, and to Road Foreman in 1995. We wish Ed the best of health in the years ahead.

## BUSY SEASON FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

BOB MYERS

The Road Maintenance Department had a busy fall season completing 25 miles of berm restoration with the "Claw". 12 miles of shoulder and berm work were completed following contracted resurfacing projects and 3 miles of berm work in Jerusalem Township. The culvert at Dorr and Raab was replaced and Gabions were placed along Neapolis-Waterville Rd. at Blue Creek, west of S.R. 295.

Four Township co-op drainage projects were completed on Dier Rd., Landsdowne Rd., Black Rd., and Box Rd. along with five County drainage projects on Old State Line

Rd., Rachel Rd., Park Colony Rd., Salisbury Rd., and Elliston Rd. Also completed were the Painting Program, the Roadway Obstruction Removal Program, numerous guard rail repair projects, the last mowing of the season, and winter ice and snow preparations.

Looking ahead, we have a back log of 5 County/Township drainage projects, tree work, minor guard rail work, and several ditch clean-outs, when weather permits. Hats off to our Road Maintenance Department employees! Work output continues to increase even with a decrease in personnel. Thanks for your hard work!

Culvert replacement at Dorr Street and Raab Road



Gabions placed along Neapolis-Waterville Road

## ICE AND SNOW SEASON ARRIVES WITH A BANG

PAUL ELINGER

With the 8" of snow before Christmas, we are into another snow and ice control season, and thankfully, it will be my last as the Road Superintendent. To be perfectly honest, after retirement I will not even slightly miss the early morning call outs.

One of the last items to complete last fall, was to update the Engineer's Office Ice and Snow Guidelines, which were several years old. It was amazing how many changes we have made in the operation over the last several seasons.

The biggest change was in the de-icing effort, and this season, our salt brine crew consists of 2 single axle trucks and 1 tandem axle truck. Our goal is to get out during normal hours, well in advance of a forecasted storm, and spray all roadways. This helps with the snow and ice adhering to the pavement and helps greatly in preventing bridge decks from

icing over. The pavement treatment can last up to 5 days, but this depends largely on how the storm hits.

The salt brine operation is patterned after ODOT, whose cooperation and support led to our initial trial on bridge decks several years ago. Other jurisdictions have come out to the Road Maintenance Department to view the mixing operation, and with the lower salt usage benefit, it appears that de-icing is here to stay. We also pre-treat some of the salt when temperatures are 17 degrees or below.

In spite of our best efforts to control costs, it seems the total cost of the snow and ice control operation continues to climb each season. Our normal around the clock operation is to have 12 trucks on 12-hour shifts with an additional 4 to 5 trucks out during the normal day shift. This provides for a high level of service and we can lap all

County Roads 4 times during a 24-hour period. These levels of equipment and manpower allow crews to team up on multi-lane highways where peak hour traffic is usually a problem.

One thing that has remained the same is the close level of cooperation and working relationship we enjoy with the Townships. Our ability to use the salt facilities at Jerusalem, Sylvania, Richfield, Springfield, Monclova, and Swanton Townships is important in providing a high level of service. We also enjoy a close working relationship with Washington Township in District 2B, which saves a lot of travel time for County Trucks. Of course, another item that remains constant is our ability to bid salt purchases by the ship load with the City of Toledo.

I am also well aware that it takes more than a good plan, good equipment and the

right combination of materials. The bottom line is we need to man the trucks and we need support personnel for round the clock operations. Often, this is over the holidays when it is difficult to leave the family, however, it is our responsibility and the response of employees is appreciated.

If you represent an agency that would like a copy of our Ice and Snow Control Guidelines, please call 419-893-2232 for a copy. These guidelines include the 3 levels of snow emergency as determined by the Sheriff and standard operating procedures for drivers.



Lucas County Engineer's Snow Plow clearing Monclova Road

## RIGHT-OF-WAY SUMMARY REPORT RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

SCOTT BERNHARD

Well actually, my parents in Florida requested a copy, but the headline is an attention grabber. Most year-end reports are a lot of pages with a bunch of statistics, so here is a quick overview of right of way in 2003 and 2004:

- 171 properties involved with right of way acquisition
- \$552,393 total property costs
- \$135,898 total contracted services (appraisal, negotiation, and title fees)

For years 1990 through 2004 (15 year total), the following applies:

- 1719 properties involved with right of way acquisition
- \$3,145,795 total property costs
- \$970,219 total contracted services
- of the 1719 properties, 39 (2.3 %) were filed for appropriation by eminent domain, with 3 going to jury trial.

Should you have questions or want the entire report which shows projects, owners, document types, individual consultants and fees, and individual property costs, call Scott @ 419-213-4547.

## CAPTION CONTEST



Can you think of a funny caption for this picture from Arizona? We will print the best ones along with the Author in the next edition. Please send your responses to Scott at 419-213-4547 or sbernh@co.lucas.oh.us.

Cont. from Pg. 1

We are taking advantage of the latest technology. We have modern Computer Aided Drafting and Design systems with civil design software. The County has one of the best GIS systems in the State and we utilize that when possible. Our computer systems manager, Brian S. Miller, designed the County Engineers bridge inspection software, now being used on laptop and desktop computers for bridge inspection throughout the state. The inspectors will soon be able to utilize the inspection software on handheld computers. Now, our surveyors have the most sophisticated GPS receivers tied to ODOT's continuously operating system, which has allowed for a tremendous increase in surveying efficiency. The Road Maintenance Department manufactures and spreads salt brine and several other agencies were quite impressed with that operation. We have modified several other maintenance operations such as shoulder work, guardrail repair, and mowing, to improve efficiencies. We have also made significant progress on our obstruction removal program and the sign upgrade program.

While our current system is in pretty good shape, there are plenty of challenges ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated employees for their efforts, and look forward to continue working together to meet the challenges ahead.

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*Engineering safety today  
for a better tomorrow.*



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